

Message Text

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14

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /047 W

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R 090838Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8019

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGUI 2372

E.9. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, CT

SUBJECT: GENERAL AMNESTY PROCLAIMED

1. IN A SERIES OF DECREES PROMULGATED DECEMBER 7, EMPEROR BOKASSA MODIFIED LEGAL PENALTIES AND PROCLAIMED A GENERAL AMNESTY FOR ALL PRISONERS EXCEPT THOSE ACCUSED OF ACTING AGAINST THE STATE OR THOSE WHO HAD DEFRAUDED THE STATE OF MORE THAN 5 MILLION CFA (\$20,000). THOSE RELEASED ARE EXCLUDED FROM FUTURE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT. TWO LAWS OF 1972 AND 1974 IMPOSING SPECIAL PENALTIES FOR STEALING AND OTHER OFFENSES WERE REPEALED.

2. SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AMNESTY THERE HAVE BEEN LARGE CROWDS OUTSIDE THE CENTRAL JAIL, MAINLY COMPOSED OF FAMILY MEMBERS WAITING TO RECEIVE THE RELEASED PRISONERS. MANY PRISONERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN FREED, SOME AFTER LONG YEARS OF CONFINEMENT. THERE HAS, HOWEVER, ALSO BEEN AN ELEMENT OF TRAGEDY AS MANY FAMILIES HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THOSE RELATIVES WHO HAVE DIED IN PRISON.

3. ESSENTIALLY ONLY POLITICAL PRISONERS REMAIN IN JAIL. OF THE 20 TO 30 WHO WERE ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE NOVEMBER 28 PLOT, A DOZEN INCLUDING A FORMER AGRICULTURE MINISTER, ARE RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN SHOT. BUT HARD INFORMATION ON THIS SCORE OR ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IS UNAVAILABLE.

4. COMMENT: OVERALL THE AMNESTY IS A POSITIVE STEP AWAY FROM THE ARBITRARY DETENTIONS OF THE PAST. IT DOES NOT, HOWEVER,
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INDICATE ANY SLACKENING OF RESOLVE BY BOKASSA WHERE HIS PERSONAL

SECURITY OR THAT OF HIS REGIME IS CONCERNED.
QUANTON

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Message Attributes

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